



Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

NUMBER 4500.53

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Certified Current as of November 21, 2003

USD(AT&L)

SUBJECT: Department of Defense (DoD) Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program

References: (a) DoD Directive 4500.53, "Commercial Passenger Airlift Management and Quality Control," May 15, 1987 (hereby canceled)
(b) Section 2640 of title 10, United States Code
(c) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Oversight of Foreign-Flag Air Carriers," October 4, 1996 (hereby canceled)
(d) Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Clarification of DoD Policy on Oversight of Foreign Flag Air Carriers," June 25, 1999, (hereby canceled)
(e) through (m), see enclosure 1

1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive:

1.1. Reissues reference (a) to update policy and responsibilities for the DoD Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program under reference (b).

1.2. Promulgates policy contained in references (c) through (g), which are hereby canceled.

1.3. Prescribes a system of management, analysis, inspection, review, and evaluation of the safety and quality practices of commercial air carriers that provide air transportation services to the Department of Defense.

2. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to collectively as "the DoD Components").

3. DEFINITIONS

Terms used in this Directive are defined in enclosure 2.

4. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

4.1. Unlike travelers from the general public who may have a choice of air carriers used, DoD travelers are generally directed to move at specific times, to specific locations, on specific carriers. In procuring air transportation and operational support services for the directed movement of its personnel and cargo, the Department of Defense has the responsibility to ensure that only air carriers demonstrating the highest possible standards of quality and safety are used. Examples of air transportation and operational support services are in paragraphs E2.1.2., and E2.1.6., respectively.

4.2. Air carriers that provide or seek to provide air transportation services or operational support services to the Department of Defense, shall have Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or the equivalent Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) air carrier or commercial operator certificates and shall remain under FAA and/or CAA regulatory and safety oversight during performance of the services. Installation of any special equipment called for by a DoD contract shall be FAA approved or an appropriate waiver obtained. Air carriers failing to meet these standards shall not be eligible to perform either air transportation or operational support services for the Department of Defense.

4.3. In addition to paragraph 4.2., above, air carriers shall meet all applicable requirements specified in reference (h) before the Department of Defense will consider a carrier for use to transport DoD personnel or cargo.

4.3.1. Fixed-wing aircraft used shall have at least two engines and be operated by at least two qualified pilots. Where a single-engine/pilot airplane is the only way to satisfy a DoD airlift requirement, a waiver of the requirement shall be obtained from the

Commercial Airlift Review Board (CARB). Due to critical, time sensitive emergency requirements, there may be times when it is not possible to obtain a waiver ahead of time. In these instances, after-the-fact notification will be provided in writing to the CARB. Single-engine/pilot operations shall be limited to Visual Flight Rules only in accordance with reference (i).

4.3.2. Operation of single-engine/pilot rotary-wing aircraft with less than ten passenger seats for flights other than emergency medical evacuation is restricted to daylight hours only and Visual Flight Rules in accordance with reference (i). Rotary-wing aircraft flights for emergency medical evacuation are authorized at any time.

4.4. All air carriers that provide, or seek to provide, air transportation services or operational support services for the Department of Defense shall be reviewed in accordance with enclosure 3 and applicable sections of references (h) or (j). Should international political exigencies preclude an on-site capability survey of a foreign air carrier, the CARB may direct alternative requirements in lieu of the requirements at enclosure 3.

4.4.1. Except where prohibited in enclosure 3, the CARB may authorize an on-site capability survey to be conducted by U.S. Government Agencies or entities other than the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office. Another U.S. Government Agency, a U.S. code-share air carrier, a third party, or any combination thereof may be used to collect data regarding the safety and quality of an air carrier that may provide air transportation services to the Department of Defense. DoD on-site capability surveys of foreign carriers require approval of the carrier involved.

4.4.2. When approved by the CARB, a performance evaluation may be conducted by any source identified in subparagraph 4.4.1., above, and shall, at a minimum, examine safety, operations, and maintenance areas. Other relevant areas shall be reviewed at the discretion of the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office. Adverse findings in a performance evaluation shall be brought to the attention of the CARB.

4.5. Air carriers from FAA non-rated or FAA rated Category 1 countries (reference (k)).

4.5.1. Unless otherwise restricted by the Department of Defense, air carriers from FAA non-rated or Category 1 countries may be used by DoD official travelers in accordance with travel policies contained in other DoD issuances.

4.5.2. A Theater Combatant Commander may request that the CARB review an air carrier from a non-rated or Category 1 country if there are concerns regarding the quality and safety of the carrier. When a nonuse recommendation is considered, the Commander in Chief, United States Transportation Command (USCINCTRANS) may request the carrier's voluntary participation in a DoD on-site capability survey. If the carrier does not consent to an on-site survey, the CARB will consider all available information to make a use/nonuse recommendation. After considering all available pertinent information, if the board determines a nonuse recommendation is appropriate, the recommendation will be forwarded in accordance with subparagraph 5.2.6.5., below. When more than one carrier in a country is reviewed, the CARB shall rank order the carriers, based on available data, and provide it to the Theater Combatant Commander to aid him in determining use of a particular carrier.

4.6. Air carriers from FAA-rated Category 2 countries.

4.6.1. Unless otherwise authorized, air carriers from Category 2 countries are in nonuse status for DoD personnel due to the uncertainty of oversight provided by the carrier's CAA.

4.6.2. Due to heightened FAA oversight of air carriers from Category 2 countries that operate to and from the United States, DoD personnel may travel on the last leg into and the first leg out of the United States on such carriers.

4.6.3. When there is an expectation that the country will remain in Category 2 status for an extended period of time and placement of the carrier in nonuse will significantly impact the DoD mission, an on-site survey may be requested and performed as indicated in subparagraph 4.5.2., above. Such surveys will normally be limited to air carriers that transported DoD passengers during the previous 12 months. The CARB shall review the results of any such on-site capability survey and forward a recommendation in accordance with subparagraph 5.2.6.5., below.

4.7. In extenuating circumstances where no acceptable alternative exists to using a foreign air carrier that has been placed in nonuse status, and the travel is mission essential, the Commander of a Theater Combatant Command for the geographic area of travel may approve the use of the foreign carrier. Exception approval is limited in all cases to individual travel and shall not apply to DoD charter operations. Approval authority may not be delegated below the Deputy to the Commander of the Theater Combatant Command.

4.8. Information voluntarily provided by an air carrier may be withheld from public disclosure in accordance with reference (b), but may be provided to the Head of another Federal Agency upon request. If information is provided, other Federal Agencies are restricted from further release by reference (b).

4.9. The senior officer on board a chartered commercial aircraft may order members of the Armed Forces to leave the aircraft when, in the absence of a representative of the Air Mobility Command, that officer determines a condition exists on the aircraft that may endanger the safety of the members.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)), shall:

5.1.1. Provide policy oversight of the DoD Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program.

5.1.2. Review foreign air carrier use/nonuse recommendations from the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) and the CARB, and render decisions on the recommendations. Decisions shall be transmitted to the Department of State, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the CARB. This responsibility may be delegated to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for (Logistics).

5.1.3. Constitute the DoD Commercial Airlift Review Authority (CARA), which shall be composed of representatives as listed at enclosure 4. The CARA shall operate in accordance with enclosure 4, and serve as an advisory body to the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), and the other Heads of the DoD Components regarding commercial air transportation quality and safety policy issues. The CARA may make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, through the USD(AT&L), regarding emergency waivers to this directive other than those assigned to the CARB in subparagraph 5.2.6.5., below.

5.2. The Commander in Chief, United States Transportation Command (USCINCTRANS), shall:

5.2.1. Manage and execute the DoD Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program and DoD responsibilities contained in references (h) and (j).

5.2.2. Establish the CARB and appoint its members/alternates. The CARB shall consist of four general/flag officers or Senior Executive Service members from the USTRANSCOM and its component commands, as appropriate.

5.2.3. Act as the decision authority on appeals of CARB decisions filed by air carriers and refer matters requiring policy decisions by the Secretary of Defense, through the USD(AT&L).

5.2.4. Maintain liaison with Theater Combatant Commanders to determine impact of CARB decisions in their respective theaters.

5.2.5. Ensure that the Commander, Air Mobility Command, shall:

5.2.5.1. Establish the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office to function as the central office for on-site capability surveys, data collection, analysis, and technical evaluation of data relative to the quality and safety of air transportation services provided to the Department of Defense.

5.2.5.2. Develop, coordinate, and implement procedures used to conduct on-site capability surveys, performance evaluations, preflight safety inspections, and operational cockpit observations of air carriers used by the Department of Defense.

5.2.5.3. Establish and publish DoD quality and safety requirements in reference (h). The requirements are in addition to standards prescribed by the FAA and the ICAO and address unique DoD needs.

5.2.5.4. Develop and implement uniform procedures in accordance with reference (b) to specify actions that may be taken by the Department of Defense against air carriers who violate ICAO standards, FAA standards, or DoD requirements. These procedures shall be published in reference (h).

5.2.6. Ensure that the DoD Commercial Airlift Review Board shall:

5.2.6.1. Review and render decisions, as necessary, regarding the qualifications and suitability, including use and nonuse, of air carriers that either:

5.2.6.1.1. Seek initial approval to provide air transportation service to the Department of Defense;

5.2.6.1.2. Seek to provide a class of service different from that for which they are currently approved;

5.2.6.1.3. Are proposed by non-DoD entities for the charter transportation of DoD personnel; or

5.2.6.1.4. Are currently approved, but subsequently fail to maintain DoD quality and safety requirements.

5.2.6.2. Decisions of the CARB are final.

5.2.6.3. Convene, in person or electronically, following any fatal accident or other serious incident involving a U.S. air carrier providing air transportation services to the Department of Defense or a foreign carrier code-sharing with a U.S. air carrier that provides air transportation services to the Department of Defense. For a fatal accident, the CARB shall make an immediate decision or recommendation as to whether action should be taken. The CARB shall convene as soon as possible, but not later than 72 hours following notification by the chairman of a serious accident.

5.2.6.4. Refer matters regarding foreign carriers, air carrier appeals of final CARB decisions, and matters on which the CARB is unable to reach a final decision to the USCINCTrans for decision or further referral, as appropriate.

5.2.6.5. Forward for decision, through the USCINCTrans to the USD(AT&L), all air carrier use/nonuse recommendations involving foreign air carriers other than those providing charter transportation service or operational support service to the Department of Defense.

5.2.6.6. Make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, through the USD(AT&L), regarding waivers to the charter transportation provisions of this Directive in emergency situations.

5.2.7. Ensure that the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office shall:

5.2.7.1. Serve as the principal action office for referring matters to the CARB on air carrier quality and safety issues.

5.2.7.2. Conduct, participate in, or oversee air carrier technical quality and safety oversight events listed at enclosure 3 to assess air carrier compliance with references (h) and (j).

5.2.7.3. Assess U.S. air carrier implementation of reference (j).

5.2.7.4. Develop procedures for determining whether a single incident, multiple incidents, trends, or other indications of conditions affecting air carrier quality and safety warrant referral to the CARB.

5.2.7.5. Maintain and analyze air carrier quality and safety information from the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board, the DoD Component air transportation customers, Federal Agencies, and other sources, including those in commercial industry.

5.2.7.6. Develop procedures to share DoD air carrier safety information with U.S. air carriers, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board, and other appropriate Federal Agencies and U.S. Government organizations in accordance with references (j) and (l), as appropriate.

5.2.7.7. Provide a quarterly summary to the Department of State, the Department of Transportation, and the FAA that lists all DoD-approved air carriers. Nonuse and temporary nonuse decisions made by the CARB regarding all U.S. and foreign air carriers shall be provided to the above organizations as soon as practical.

5.2.7.8. Provide orientation to new CARB members and alternates regarding responsibilities, functions and procedures of the DoD Commercial Air Transportation Quality and Safety Review Program.

5.3. The Commanders of the Theater Combatant Commands shall:

5.3.1. Develop procedures for reporting air transportation quality and safety concerns within their geographic area of responsibility to the USCINTRANS.

5.3.2. Assist the USCINCTRANS by providing information to the CARB regarding air carriers from FAA non-rated countries.

5.3.3. Issue exceptions to policy, as appropriate, for OCONUS travel on a foreign air carrier in a nonuse status in accordance with paragraph 4.7., above.

5.4. The Heads of the DoD Components shall report air transportation quality and safety concerns to the USCINCTRANS.

6. INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

6.1. The reporting of air transportation quality and safety concerns to the USCINCTRANS is exempt from licensing in accordance with paragraph C4.4.2., DoD 8910.1-M (reference (m)).

6.2. The air carrier on-site capability survey and performance evaluation and the pre-flight safety inspection are exempt from licensing in accordance with paragraphs C4.4.2. and C4.4.8., DoD 8910.1-M (reference (m)).

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.



Rudy de Leon
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Enclosures - 4

- E1. References, continued
- E2. Definitions
- E3. Scope and Frequency Oversight of DoD Air Carriers
- E4. CARA Membership

E1. ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES, continued

- (e) Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) Memorandum, "Minimum Standards for Commercial Aircraft Operations," August 20, 1996 (hereby canceled)
- (f) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Logistics) Memorandum, "Single-Engine/Pilot Aircraft Waiver Authority," October 23, 1992 (hereby canceled)
- (g) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Logistics) Memorandum, "Air Carrier Inspections," April 24, 1990 (hereby canceled)
- (h) Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 861
- (i) Federal Aviation Regulation, current edition
- (j) Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Defense and the Air Transport Association of America for International Code-Share Airline Safety Reviews, August 5, 1999
- (k) Federal Aviation Administration International Aviation Safety Assessment Program, Federal Register, Vol. 65, No. 102, May 25, 2000
- (l) Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Defense and the Department of Transportation Concerning Commercial Aviation Programs, November 10, 1998
- (m) [DoD 8910.1-M](#), "DoD Procedures for Management of Information Requirements," June 30, 1998

E2. ENCLOSURE 2

DEFINITIONS

E2.1.1. Air Carrier. Commercial air carriers and commercial air operators that operate commercial fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft in accordance with reference (i). Commercial air carriers under contract with the Department of Defense, or operating on behalf of the Department of Defense, shall have FAA or Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) certificates, as appropriate, to engage in air transportation or provide operational support services.

E2.1.2. Air Transportation Services. The transport of DoD personnel or cargo by fixed- or rotary-wing commercial aircraft, where such services are acquired, primarily for the transportation of DoD personnel and cargo, through donation or any form of contract, tender, blanket ordering agreement, Government charge card, Government or commercial transportation request (TR), bill of lading, or similar instruments. Air transportation services also include medical evacuation services, paratrooper drops, and charter airlift and group travel arranged by the Military Service Academies, foreign military sales, nonappropriated fund instrumentalities, and by other DoD and non-DoD activities for DoD personnel. The policy contained in this Directive shall not apply to individually procured, discretionary air travel, such as that associated with military leave or pass.

E2.1.3. Code-Sharing. Code-sharing is a marketing arrangement in which an air carrier places its designator code on a flight operated by another air carrier and sells tickets for that flight.

E2.1.4. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) International Safety Assessment (IASA) Categories. The FAA IASA program (reference (k)) assesses the ability of a foreign country's CAA to adhere to international standards established by the United Nation's technical agency for aviation, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The FAA has established ratings for the status of countries as follows:

E2.1.4.1. Category 1--Does Comply with ICAO Standards. A country's CAA has been found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with ICAO aviation safety standards.

E2.1.4.2. Category 2--Does Not Comply with ICAO Standards. A country's CAA does not meet ICAO standards for aviation oversight. Operations to the United States by a carrier from a Category 2 country are limited to those in effect at the time a

country is classified as Category 2 and are subjected to heightened FAA surveillance. Expansion or changes in services to the United States are not permitted while a country is in Category 2 status unless the carrier arranges to have new services conducted by an air carrier from a Category 1 country. Category 2 countries that do not have operations to the U.S. at the time of the FAA assessment are not permitted to commence such operations unless it arranges to have its flights conducted by an air carrier from a Category 1 country.

E2.1.4.3. Non-rated. A country's CAA is labeled "non-rated" if it has not been assessed by the FAA.

E2.1.5. Group Travel. Twenty-one or more passengers traveling on orders from the same organization on the same date to the same destination to attend the same function.

E2.1.6. Operational Support Services. Missions performed by commercial air carriers that use fixed- or rotary-winged aircraft to provide services other than air transportation services as defined in paragraph E2.1.2., above. Examples include, but are not limited to, range instrumentation and services, target-towing, sling loads, and electronic countermeasures target flights.

E3. ENCLOSURE 3SCOPE AND FREQUENCY OVERSIGHT OF DoD AIR CARRIERSE3.1.1. Air Carrier Categories and Descriptions

Air Carrier Categories and Descriptions	
Category	Description
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) air carriers that perform scheduled service or charter operations to transport DoD personnel* •Non-CRAF, U.S. air carriers providing scheduled service through the General Services Administration (GSA) Domestic City Pairs Program that transport DoD personnel •Foreign flag (international) air carriers under charter contract to transport DoD personnel* •Nonscheduled air carriers, U.S. and foreign (non-international), under charter contract and utilizing aircraft with ten or more seats to transport DoD personnel*
II	•Scheduled service foreign code-share air carriers that transport DoD passengers through the GSA International City Pair Program
III	•Nonscheduled service air carriers, U.S. and foreign, that utilize aircraft with nine or fewer seats and transport at least three percent of the annual DoD traffic in this type aircraft
IV	•U.S. air carriers under charter contract to the Department of Defense that transport cargo only
V	•U.S. and foreign air carriers not indicated in the above categories, and transporting DoD personnel or providing operational support services
On-site Capability Surveys must be performed by the DoD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office.	

E3.1.2. Oversight Scope and Frequency

Oversight Scope and Frequency					
Air Carrier Categories	On-site Capability Survey	Performance Evaluation	Performance Assessment IAW ref (j)	Preflight Safety Inspection	Operational Cockpit Observation
I	I, B, D	I, S, D		M, P	D
II	D	I, S, D	I, B		
III	I, B+, D	I, S, D			
IV	I, D	I, A, D			D
V	D	D			D
I - Initial S - Semiannual A - Annual B - Biennial + - Performed to the greatest extent practical utilizing the sources in subparagraph 4.4.1., above. D - As directed by the CARB. M - Each international charter mission departing the United States. P - Each domestic charter mission to the greatest extent practical.					

E4. ENCLOSURE 4

COMMERCIAL AIRLIFT REVIEW AUTHORITY (CARA) MEMBERSHIP

- E4.1.1. The Chair. The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics.
- E4.1.2. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families & Education.
- E4.1.3. The Director for Logistics, Joint Staff (J-4).
- E4.1.4. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, U.S. Army.
- E4.1.5. The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics, U.S. Navy.
- E4.1.6. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations and Logistics, U.S. Air Force.
- E4.1.7. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations and Logistics, U.S. Marine Corps.
- E4.1.8. The Deputy Commander in Chief, USTRANSCOM.
- E4.1.9. The Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Transportation Policy.
- E4.1.10. Nonvoting members include the Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Defense, and representatives from other Federal Agencies as required by the Chair.
- E4.1.11. The Chair or any member may be represented by a designated alternate. All designated alternates shall be general/flag officers or civilians of the Senior Executive Service.
- E4.1.12. The CARA shall reach all recommendations through a majority vote.
- E4.1.13. The Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Transportation Policy shall serve as the CARA Secretariat.